DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 081 EC 124 346

AUTHOR Gallegos, Robert L.; And Others
TITLE Bilingual/Bicultural Education--Special Education: An Interface.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of The Council for Exceptional Children (58th, Philadelphia, PA, April, 1980, Session F-85).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Biculturalism; *Bilingual Students; *Court Litigation; *Disabilities; *Minority Groups; *Student Needs

ABSTRACT

The article addresses two basic issues which relate to the education of the bilingual/bicultural handicapped child--proper assessment and appropriate classroom placement, and the provision of educational services which adequately meet the linguistic and cultural needs of the handicapped minority child. Relevant historic litigation and its impact on current special education programing is summarized. Finally, bilingual/bicultural considerations are explored, examined, and related to the needs of the exceptional bilingual child. (Author/SBH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED187081

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Bilingual/Bicultural Education - Special Education: An Interface

Robert L. Gallegos, Ph.D.

Anne Y. Garner, Ed.D.

Roy C. Rodriquez, Ph.D.

Department of Educational Specialties
New Mexico State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Robert Gallegos

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC124346

Bilingual/Bicultural Education - Special Education:
An Interface

In May, 1978 the Delegate Assembly of the Council for Exceptional Children approved a set of Minorities Position Policy Statements (CEC, 1978). Expressed among the many policies and positions in the extensive document were two underlying concerns:

(1) That minority children are being improperly assessed and inappropriately placed in lower ability groups or special education programs.

(2) That among handicapped minority children, many are being provided educational services, but it is often questionable whether these services appropriately provide for the cultural differences that may accompany a handicap.

The focus of this article will be to address those issues and to explore some alternatives which may enhance and facilitate the growth of the handicapped minority child in the school setting.

Assessment and Placement

In its Position Policy Statements, the CEC Delegate Assembly made reference to its concern that many tests (especially those which are norm-referenced) exaggerate group differences and underscore group inferiority. Rodriquez, Cole, Stile, and Gallegos (1979) have stated that the courts have been consistent in their contention that standardized tests are a questionable method by which to evaluate a minority child's intellectual ability. The authors further contended that the courts have recognized

the lack of awareness and sensitivity towards culturally different groups among those responsible for the intellectual evaluation of children.

Rodriquez, et al have pointed to the State of California as having been instrumental in its litigation concerning minorities in special education. They have described several significant cases as follows:

> In the Diana vs. Board of Education of California (1973) case, the action was brought about by nine Mexican-American children whose predominant language was Spanish. All had been placed in classes for the intellectually handicapped after being tested. After re-testing in Spanish, the majority of the children scored above the cutoff for the intellectually handicapped. The case was settled out of court, but it did indicate the gross disparity in test scores when children are examined in a non-dominant language. Similarly, Larry P. vs. Riles (1972) forced school districts to drop the use of intelligence tests as the sole criterion for placement of children in special education classrooms. The issue of cultural bias on standardized tests was of major concern to the courts.
>
> In Covarrubias vs. San Diego School District (1970), the court established the right of parents to be provided information in their "home language" regarding the nature of program goals and curriculum for the mentally retarded. The intent of this decree was to allow parents to give informed consent as to the placement of their child in a special education program. Similarly, in Arreola vs. Board of Education of California (1968), the court ordered that Hispanic parents be

notified and be given an opportunity to challenge the special education placement of their child.

At issue in these four cases was not only the traditional misplacement of minorities in special education classes as was the historical precedent. Additionally the issue involved the rights of those students, who may have been properly identified as in need of special education, but who were yet denied equal protection due to the additional factors of linguistic and/or cultural differences.

In addition to judicial recognition, Rodriquez, et al have suggested that the Federal government has taken a stand on the issue. They pointed out that the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) contains direct reference to bilingual/bicultural education as one alternative to be used for insuring equal educational opportunity for all handicapped children. In that act, both culture and native language are related to the Bilingual Act (20 U.S.C. 880b-1(a) (2)). As the law mandates a "free and appropriate" public education for all handicapped children and requires the development of individualized education programs (IEP) to meet the unique needs of each exceptional child, this must certainly include bilingual education considerations for handicapped children who are linguistically and culturally different.

Providing Educational Services

Chinn (1979) has referred to the handicapped minority child as suffering a "double whammy". He has described these children as needing to cope with a different language and set of cultural standards, as well as the realities and limitations of handicap. The conflicts facing the handicapped minority child might be summarized in the following three categories: (a) inconsistency in

environments, (b) frustration in the development of a positive self-concept, and (c) considerations related to specific handicapping conditions. Each of these categories will be examined, and alternatives for dealing with these conflicts and facilitating the development of the minority handicapped child will be explored.

Inconsistency in Environments

Chan and Rueda (1979) have suggested that a common foundation of human functioning is basic to all human groups. They have cited Cole and Bruner (1971) in stating that language, memory, and other cognitive skills are said to be common to all groups, but may manifest themselves in different ways depending on the social, physical, and economic structure in particular settings. Chan and Rueda have indicated that conflict and differences arise when learning styles required in the home and community environment are not consistent with the learning styles required in the school.

Douglass Price - Williams (1975) has expressed the need to examine whether the task, the context, and the materials are familiar or unfamiliar to a child in a school setting. Price - Williams has apparently suggested that the school may be requiring a minority child to perform an unfamiliar task in an unfamiliar setting, and that the cognitive skills he has developed and displayed in other settings are not observed.

Labov (1970) has referred to the argument that language is a central problem for minority children. The child whose dominant language is other than English is obviously faced with an inconsistency in home - school environments. Yet Labov has suggested that it may be unreasonable to assume that standard English skills be a prerequisite to effective communication and thinking. He implied that requiring standard English skills ignores the fundamental universality of all languages. Research by Labov and Baratz and

Baratz (1970) has led those authors to suggest that when children are instructed in their dominant language in familiar settings and with familiar materials, they are capable of very complex language and considerable achievement. As a result of his research, Labov has suggested that the prerequisite of standard English abilities for school is more a product of racial and socioeconomic discrimination than it is a demonstrated requirement for potential educability.

Development of a Positive Self-Concept

Garwood (1979) has suggested that the minority child may be hampered by feelings of inadequacy and depressed self-concept resulting from marked differences between his customary social environment and that of the school. Chinn (1979) has additionally referred to subtle forms of racism existing in distorted stereotypes found in television, motion pictures, and related media stories. He has pointed out that U.S. social studies books have also distorted and omitted reference to ethnic history and heroism. Chinn has implied that the vigorously competitive world of the "majority group" often imposes restrictions on the traditional world, so that both parents and children are frustrated in the attempt to meet their own cultural expectations and maintain positive self-perceptions.

Considerations on Specific Handicapping Conditions

Dunn (1973) has pointed out that the relation of language and associated disabilities to mental retardation is a high one. He has implied that even the mildly retarded suffer language and speech related delays so that as they grow older, the inability to manipulate language becomes a serious problem.

Language has been defined as a system of signs and symbols used for communication. These symbols have commonly understood meanings and are used in speaking and writing for purposes of communication. Dunn (1973) has

defined speech as "the production of the unique, audible utterances which serve as the basic symbols for oral language. The ability to be creative is one aspect of human language as are the abilities to use language for learning and reflecting on ideas and messages that are being received.

Fallen (1978) has stated that normal language development depends on normal physical, motor sensory, cognitive, and social growth during the first five or six years of life. She indicated that if the child's developmental systems are functioning, language acquisition is accomplished by the time the child is school age. However, any impairment to the developmental system impedes language skills development and presents the child with a problem on entering school. Fallen has referred to impaired listening and speaking skills and a disability in interacting with others and the environment when developmental delays occur.

The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped stated in 1977 that the percent of U.S. children identified as having speech/language impairments, learning disabilities, and mental retardation were at 3.5, 3.0, and 3.0 respectively. Studies (Farber, 1959, 1968; Levinson, 1962; Heber & Dever, 1970) have shown that while the incidence of the more severe levels of disability remains stable across populations, there is great variability in incidence at the mild level. These studies have additionally indicated that higher figures for mild retardation have been found among racial and ethnic minorities, low socioeconomic communities, and people in rural, isolated and inner-city ghettos. Most noticeably, there are higher figures during the school years than in later life.

The implications are obvious and two-fold:

(1) Disproportionate numbers of minority children are being identified as language/speech impaired, learning disabled

and mentally handicapped in a school setting which resurrects the questions of assessment, placement, and expectations.

(2) The nature of normal language development is such that when a physical, cognitive, sensory, or social delay does exist, the child attempting to develop and relate two languages and cultures is at a distinct disadvantage.

Facilitating Learning for the Minority Handicapped Child

It appears that two major problems exist in working with minority handicapped children. These are: (a) the handicap itself and (b) the integration of language and culture into the curriculum. Depending on the nature of the handicapping condition, programming would necessarily include those methodologies, equipment, materials, and related service activities which would most appropriately meet the demands of the disability. Within the context of those strategies, a program can be further individualized to meet the needs of the minority child by incorporating cultural considerations into the curriculum.

Chan and Rueda (1979) have suggested that practitioners must remain flexible in their approach to ethnic minorities. They have cited sensitivity as being one of the most desirable qualities in teachers of minority children. Chan and Rueda have defined sensitivity in terms of "responding, appreciating, and allowing differences" (p. 535). They have suggested that teachers be receptive to the cultural contributions each child in a class may offer.

Haring (1978) has implied that language structure is best taught in the context of the events, experiences, and relationships in a child's world. He has suggested for children with developmental delays, a teacher can begin

to evoke and reinforce thinking processes and language structures by beginning with what the child knows. Pepper (1976) has adopted a similar philosophy and adapted it to culture by suggesting that the history and value systems of the children in a class be explored, valued and accepted. Based on the studies of Riessman (1962) and Labov (1969), Fallen (1978) has stated that oral language stimulation centering on the primary home language is beneficial, especially during the early years of schooling.

Based on an unpublished dissertation by Gallegos (1974), Rodriquez et al (1979) have proposed an elaborate structure for incorporating both language and culture into the curriculum of the minority handicapped child. In this structure, those authors have included the following considerations: (a) Ideological (cultural beliefs), (b) Sociological (customs/traditions), (c) Attitudinal (perceptions/behaviors), and (d) Technological-Artistic (creations). They have expanded each of the categories so that information pertaining to family structure, parent participation, attitudes regarding handicaps as well as sociological, cultural and linguistic systems are explored. The authors have suggested that activities may be designed to incorporate language and culture into a curriculum where children must be accomodated with regards to specific handicapping conditions.

Conclusion

The instruction of minority handicapped children has come into focus in recent years out of a dual concern: (a) the appropriateness of assessment and placement procedures and (b) the provisions made for the incorporation of language and culture into a curriculum which adequately meets the demands of a specific disability. The literature has indicated that for those

minority children who suffer developmental delays, programming which meets both disability and cultural needs is possible and desirable.

Bibliography

Baratz, S. & Baratz, J. Early childhood intervention: The social science base of institutional racism. Harvard Educational Review, 1970, 40, 29-50.

Chan, K. & Rueda, R. Poverty and culture in education: Separate but equal. Exceptional Children, 1979, 45, 422-428.

Chinn, P. The exceptional minority child: Issues and some answers Exceptional Children, 1979, 45, 532-536.

Council for Exceptional Children. Minorities position policy statements (in Official Actions of the Delegate Assembly at the 56th Annual International Convention). Exceptional Children, 1978, 45, 57-64.

Dunn, L. M. (Ed.). Exceptional Children in the Schools. New York: Hot, Rinehart, & Winston, 1973.

Fallen, N. Young children with special needs. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1970.

Farber, B. Mental retardation: Its social context and social consequences. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1959.

Gallegos, R. A study of cultural markers in selected readers designed for bilingual/bicultural programs. Unpublished dissertation. University of New Mexico, 1974.

Garwood, G. Educating young handicapped children: A developmental approach. Germantown, Maryland: Aspen, 1979.

Haring, N. Behavior of exceptional children. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, Co., 1978.

Heber, R., & Dever, R. Research on education and rehabilitation of the mentally retarded. In H.C. Haywood (Ed.), Social-cultural aspects of mental retardation. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970.

Labov, W. The logic of non-standard English. In F. Williams (ed.), Language and poverty: Perspectives on a theme. Chicago: Markham, 1969.

Levinson, E. J. Retarded children in Maine: A survey and analysis. Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1962.

Pepper, F. C. Teaching the American-Indian child in mainstream settings. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), Mainstreaming and the Minority Child. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, 1976.

Price - Williams, D. Exploration in cross-cultural psychology. San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp, 1975.

Public Law 94-142. Education for All Handicapped Children Act. November 29, 1975.

Riessman, F. The culturally deprived child. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Rodriquez, R., Cole, J., Stile, S., & Gallegos, R. Bilingualism and biculturalism for the special education classroom. Teacher Education and Special Education, 2, No. 4, 1979

List of Cases

Arreola vs. State Board of Education of California, Civil Action No. F-30, 35 RFP (N.D. Cal. 1968).

Covarrubias vs. San Diego School District, Civil Action No. 6-21, 36 RFP (N.D. Cal. 1970).

Diana vs. State Board of Education of California, Civil Action No. C-70, 37 RFP (N.D. Cal. 1973).

Larry P. vs. Riles, 374 F. Supp. 1306 (1972).